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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/928,236	08/13/2001	Takenosuke Harada	041-1961A	7981
22902 7590 09/16/2009 CLARK & BRODY 1090 VERMONT AVENUE, NW SUITE 250 WASHINGTON, DC 20005			EXAMINER DUBASKY, GIGI L	
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/928,236

Applicant(s)

HARADA ET AL.

Examiner

GIGI L. DUBASKY

Art Unit

2421

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11 January 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-19, 22 and 31-42 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-19, 22 and 31-42 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 11 January 2006 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/C)
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____
- Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Arguments

1. Applicant's arguments, see the Election, filed on 01/11/2006, with respect to Election/Restrictions have been fully considered and are persuasive. The restriction has been withdrawn. Claims 1-19, 22 and 31-42 corresponding to elected invention of Figures 10-12 are pending.

Miscellaneous

Please note that the examiner of record for the prosecution of this application has been changed for this office action.

The claims 6 and 7 recite the limitation of "**or the like**" which may raise a question as to limiting effect of the language in a claim. The subject matter of a properly construed claim is defined by the terms that limit its scope. The language, which suggests or makes optional but does not require steps to be performed or which does not limit a claim to a particular structure, is improper. See MPEP 2111.04. It is suggested that the Applicants delete this phrase in the claims.

Drawings

2. The drawings of Figures 7-8 are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a) because they fail to show the details (labels) of the elements (boxes) in the Figures as described in the specification. It is suggested that Applicants provide labels or descriptions for all elements in the Figures 7-8 to easily understand the disclosed invention. Any structural detail that is essential for a proper understanding of the disclosed invention should be shown in the drawing. MPEP § 608.02(d). Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

4. Claims 1-2, 4-9, 19, 22, 33 and 35-41 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Jones et al (US 5978013).

Regarding claim 1, Jones discloses a method for issuing a coupon in a broadcasting system including a center and at least one information broadcast receiving terminal apparatus (see Figure 1 for a cable television distribution network as a "broadcasting system" includes elements 10, 12 and 14 located at a cable television station/head end as a "center" and subscriber unit 20 as an "information broadcast receiving terminal"), comprising the step of: providing a service providing apparatus (cable TV 12 in Figure 1 as a "service providing apparatus") in said center; configuring contents data of services of each of various programs with at least one of video information, sound information and character information, said at least one of video information, sound information and character information being transmitted by a

broadcasting means (Col 2 lines 46-50 and 63-64 and Col 4 lines 60-65 for offering a coupon to the television viewer through a televised offer such as a product advertisement (a service of each various programs) represented by video signal (configuring data with video information) by embedding a coupon identifier (contents data of service) in the video signals of advertising programming; Col 5 lines 2-8 for coupon identifier includes closed-captioned text of "COUPON AVAILABLE" (configuring data with character information), or has a verbally announcement of coupon available (configuring data with sound information); and Col 5 lines 58-61 for transmitting modulated signals via cable distribution network);

providing service additional information in which information relating to said services is described as attribute information (Col 5 lines 12-27 for transmitting retrieved coupon packet (addition information of service), which includes coupon image bits defining coupon information (Col 6 lines 53-57) such as advertised product name, pictorial representation of product, advertiser's logo... (attribute information) (Col 11 lines 50-65), to subscriber unit);

broadcasting said contents data of said services and said service additional information as data of each of said various programs from said service providing apparatus (Col 3 lines 3-9 for transmitting token/coupon identifier and token/coupon information over a data channels or over television channel by embedding them in the television signal); receiving said contents data of said services and said service additional information by said information broadcast receiving terminal apparatus of a viewer (Col 3 lines 29-31 for receiving both television channels and data channels at the subscriber unit) and

accumulating the same in said information broadcast receiving terminal apparatus (Col 5 lines 33-35 and Col 9 lines 30-38 for storing (accumulating) received coupon identifier and coupon information into memory);

regenerating at least one of said contents data of said services and said service additional information received by said information broadcast receiving terminal apparatus to provide additional services on the basis of said service additional information when said viewer viewing said programs (Col 7 line 54 through Col 8 line 2 for the subscriber unit functions both as a coupon generator and as a "converter box" to extract, decode and generate or regenerate received coupon identifiers and coupon information to provide a product coupon based on coupon information when a viewer views the television programs);

broadcasting coupon indirect information used to issue a coupon corresponding to one of the contents data of said services only upon performance of at least one predetermined operation respectively corresponding to said coupon indirect information (Col 4 line 60 through Col 5 line 11 for embedding coupon identifier which includes a closed-captioned text of "COUPON AVAILABLE", a coupon identification number and a control code in the video signals of advertising programming; Col 5 lines 11-26 for transmitting coupon packet corresponding to coupon identifier (coupon indirect information) used to issue a coupon when a control code of embedded coupon identifier is detected (upon performance of a predetermined operation)), said coupon indirect information including said coupon while the coupon is incapable of use and alone being incapable of use for issuing said coupon (Jones' coupon identifiers is alone incapable of

use for issuing a coupon without a received coupon packet within an available window); receiving said coupon indirect information by said information broadcast receiving terminal apparatus and accumulating the same therein (Col 5 lines 33-35 for receiving and storing coupon identifiers); and decoding said coupon indirect information upon performance at the information broadcast receiving terminal apparatus of the predetermined operation corresponding to the coupon indirect information, so as to issue a coupon which is capable of use (Col 5 lines 33-49 for retrieving or selecting a coupon identifier in response to viewer's request to print a coupon, searching to find a coupon packet corresponding to selected coupon identifier and reconstructing (decoding) to print a coupon).

Regarding claim 2, Jones discloses the method as discussed in the rejection of claim 1. Jones further discloses the coupon indirect information includes at least one piece of information corresponding to at least one of the contents data of the services which can issue a coupon (Col 5 lines 2-11 for the coupon identifier includes a closed-captioned text of "COUPON AVAILABLE", a coupon identification number and a control code corresponding to advertised product), and when said at least one of the contents data of the services is regenerated so as to be displayed by the regeneration step in the information broadcast receiving terminal apparatus, in a case where the coupon indirect information corresponding to the at least one of the contents data of the services is accumulated (Col 10 lines 29-54 for displaying a single-digit LED or displaying currently stored coupon identification number on LCD display to represent number of coupons

currently available to the television viewer), said decoding step decodes the coupon indirect information according to regeneration operation on the basis of the one piece of information so as to notify of the coupon to said viewer (Col 8 lines 25-43 for decoding the ASCII-encoded string "COUPON AVAILABLE" of coupon identifier to display it on television to notify the viewer).

Regarding claim 4, Jones discloses the method as discussed in the rejection of claim 1. Jones further discloses an arbitrary coupon code is given to the coupon (Col 5 lines 9-11 for including a coupon identification number in the coupon identifier), and said decoding step has a step of publishing the coupon code in media so as to notify the coupon code to said viewer (Col 10 lines 50-54 for displaying the number of coupon identification numbers currently stored to notify viewer of coupons available), a step of inputting the coupon code into the information broadcast receiving terminal apparatus by said viewer and a step of decoding the coupon indirect information by using the inputted coupon code so as to issue said coupon (Col 10 lines 54-66 and Col 12 lines 20-38).

Regarding claim 5, Jones discloses the method as discussed in the rejection of claim 1. Jones further discloses the contents data broadcasting step has a step of simultaneously broadcasting a coupon code for decoding the coupon indirect information in addition to the contents data of said services and said service additional information from said service providing apparatus (Col 13 lines 55-65 for encoding

coupon identifier and corresponding coupon information into corresponding video signal; Col 3 lines 6-8 for transmitting the embedded coupon identifier including coupon identification number (coupon code) and coupon information (service additional information) over the television channel of programs and advertisement (service)), said coupon indirect information receiving step has a step of simultaneously receiving said coupon code in addition to the coupon indirect information (Col 3 lines 29-31 for receiving both television channels and data channels at subscriber unit) and wherein said decoding step has a step of decoding the coupon indirect information by using the received coupon code so as to issue said coupon (Col 10 lines 54-66 and Col 12 lines 20-38).

Regarding claims 6-7, Jones discloses the method as discussed in the rejection of claims 2 and 4 respectively. Jones further discloses the coupon information is notified to said viewer (Col 8 lines 37-44 for displaying "COUPON AVAILABLE" to notify viewer), whether said coupon information is notified to said viewer is judged on the basis of a record of viewer information such as a view record, taste information or the like accumulated in said information broadcast receiving terminal apparatus (Col 9 lines 4-20 for notifying the viewer of coupon availability upon comparing the demographic information in received coupon packet to the demographic information from demographic ROM that storing information about type of site, number of persons at the site, their ages, sexes, their consumption habits (view record) and their interested classes of products (taste information), if they match).

Regarding claim 8, Jones discloses the method as discussed in the rejection of claim 1. Jones further discloses the information broadcast receiving terminal apparatus has a remote controller (see element 22 in Figure 1) to which an identification number used to identify at least a dealer is given to issue or handle said coupon (Col 11 lines 47-65 for using coupon identification number to retrieve coupon information which includes the advertiser' logo to identify an advertiser), and said identification number transmitted from said remote controller is used as a coupon code to issue said coupon or to vary an amount to be discounted (Col 15 line 62 through Col 16 line 8).

Regarding claim 9, Jones discloses all limitations of the method as discussed in the rejection of claim 8. Jones further discloses the identification number is stored in an IC card (Col 2 line 59 through Col 3 line 9 for generating token/coupon having any suitable form where the token/coupon is a product coupon or a ticket or a "smart card" by using token identifier to retrieve token information including identifier number for advertiser of the advertised products).

Regarding claim 19, Jones discloses the method as discussed in the rejection of claim 1. Jones further discloses broadcasting said coupon indirect information corresponding to a broadcast program, further comprising a step of simultaneously broadcasting the broadcast program and the coupon code used to issue the coupon corresponding to the broadcast program (Col 13 lines 55-65 for encoding coupon

identifier and corresponding coupon information into corresponding video signal; Col 3 lines 6-8 for transmitting the embedded coupon identifier including coupon identification number (coupon code) and coupon information (service additional information) over the television channel of programs and advertisement (service)); and receiving in the information broadcast receiving terminal apparatus the broadcasted broadcast program and the coupon code (Col 3 lines 29-31 for receiving both television channels and data channels at subscriber unit) to confirm whether said coupon is issued in said information broadcast receiving terminal apparatus to research a view record of said broadcast program (Col 9 lines 4-20 for coupon processor of the subscriber unit compares the received demographic information from coupon packet to the demographic information accumulated in the subscriber unit to detect a match).

Regarding claim 22, all functionalities of an information broadcast receiving terminal apparatus in claim 22 are analyzed and rejected corresponding to claim 1. Jones discloses claimed hardware components in the receiver (see Figures 3-4).

Regarding claim 33, all limitations of claim 33 are analyzed corresponding to claim 2. So, claim 33 is rejected on the same ground as claim 2.

Regarding claim 35, all limitations of claim 35 are analyzed corresponding to claim 4. So, claim 35 is rejected on the same ground as claim 4.

Regarding claim 36, all limitations of claim 36 are analyzed corresponding to claim 7. So, claim 36 is rejected on the same ground as claim 7.

Regarding claims 37-39, all limitations of claims 37-39 are analyzed corresponding to claim 8. So, claims 37-39 are rejected on the same ground as claim 8.

Regarding claim 40, all limitations of claim 40 are analyzed corresponding to claim 9. So, claim 40 is rejected on the same ground as claim 9.

Regarding claim 41, Jones discloses the method as discussed in the rejection of claim 1. Jones further discloses the coupon corresponds to an additional service provided by the broadcasting system (Col 4 lines 60-65).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claims 3 and 34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jones et al (US 5978013) in view of Hashimoto et al (US 5931905).

Regarding claim 3, Jones discloses the method as discussed in the rejection of claim 1. Jones further discloses the coupon indirect information includes at least one piece of information corresponding to the service which can issue a coupon (Col 5 lines 2-11 for the coupon identifier includes a closed-captioned text of "COUPON AVAILABLE", a coupon identification number and a control code corresponding to advertised product), and wherein when said content data of the service is regenerated so as to be displayed by the regeneration step in the information broadcast receiving terminal apparatus, in a case where the coupon indirect information corresponding to the content data of the direct mail service is accumulated (Col 10 lines 29-54 for displaying a single-digit LED or displaying currently stored coupon identification number on LCD display to represent number of coupons currently available to the television viewer), said decoding step decodes the coupon indirect information according to the regeneration operation on the basis of the one piece of information so as to notify information of the coupon to said viewer (Col 8 lines 25-43 for decoding the ASCII-encoded string "COUPON AVAILABLE" of coupon identifier to display it on television to notify the viewer).

Jones does not explicitly disclose the services include a direct mail service broadcasted by the center.

Hashimoto discloses a TV mail system which besides being capable of receiving and displaying the broadcasting programs, provides a mail or direct mail service broadcasted by a mail server (see abstract).

Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to modify Jones' system with the teaching of Hashimoto about providing direct mail service through a TV, so to provide an enhanced interactive system that enables to receive a direct mail service through a TV.

Regarding claim 34, all limitations of claim 34 are analyzed corresponding to claim 3. So, claim 34 is rejected on the same ground as claim 3.

7. Claims 10, 31-32 and 42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jones et al (US 5978013) in view of Holman (US 5287181) of record.

Regarding claim 10, Jones discloses all limitations of the method as discussed in the rejection of claim 1. Jones further discloses issued coupons are structurally managed in said information broadcast receiving terminal apparatus (see Figure 8 and Col 14 lines 21-25 and Col 15 lines 6-21 for structurally organizing stored coupon information in the memory of subscriber unit by the processor to easily search, compare and issue a selected coupon).

Jones fails to disclose the coupon indirect information includes coupon classification information.

Holman discloses the coupon-related information includes a code to identify the product (Col 6 lines 65-68). Each product type will have a different code number, for example, grocery item with code 1, hardware items with code 2, and automobile items

with code 3 and so on. Using this code, the stored coupons are presorted automatically into separate categories of items (Col 7 lines 1-39).

Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to modify Jones' coupon information with the inclusion of coupon classification information taught by Holman, so to assist the user in the convenient use of desired coupons and more easily and effectively target users base on their taste information by the advertisers.

Regarding claims 31-32, Jones discloses all limitations of the apparatus as discussed in the rejection of claim 19. With the same motivation to modify Jones' system with the teaching of Holman as discussed in claim 10, the combined system further discloses when view record of said broadcast program is researched, classification information included in said coupon indirect information is specified to certain contents so that coupons are classified (Col 7 lines 1-39).

Regarding claim 42, Jones in view of Holman discloses the method as discussed in the rejection of claim 31. Jones further discloses transmitting the issued coupon from the broadcast receiving terminal apparatus to said service providing apparatus of said center (taught by Jones; Col 16 lines 31-67 for printed coupon can be redeemed at retail store; also taught by Holman; Col 18 lines 59-67) and providing said additional service to the broadcast receiving terminal apparatus (Jones and Holman both teach providing advertisement and coupon services).

8. Claims 11-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jones et al (US 5978013) in view of Candelore (US 6057872).

Regarding claim 11, Jones discloses all limitations of the method as discussed in the rejection of claim 1.

Jones does not explicitly disclose when the coupon is used, an amount corresponding to the used coupon is reduced on the basis of use record information accumulated in said information broadcast receiving terminal apparatus.

Candelore discloses a system of digital coupons for pay television (title). In this system the subscribers automatically receive coupon credits which are free or reduced price for a particular pay-per-view program when they meet the preconditions of the digital coupons. The terminals maintain a running balance of available coupon credits and inform subscribers the available balance (see abstract). When the user orders PPV programs, the overall currency credit balance is decreased by the cost of the programs (Col 9 lines 2-15).

Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to modify Jones' system with the teaching of Candelore, so to provide an enhanced interactive coupon system which allow users to receive an immediate credit for their loyalty with paperless and encourage users to purchase additional program services.

Regarding claims 12-13, Jones discloses all limitations of the method as discussed in the rejection of claim 1. With the same motivation to modify Jones' system with the teaching of Candelore as discussed in claim 11, the combined system further discloses a pay-per-view service, a coupon is designated when said pay-per-view service is used, whereby an amount corresponding to the coupon is reduced in a charge (Col 9 lines 2-42).

Regarding claim 14, Jones in view of Candelore discloses the method as discussed in the rejection of claim 11. The combined system further discloses coupon has at least two values which are a current value and a discount value, and said discount value is subtracted from said current value when said coupon is used (taught by Candelore; see Figure 4).

Regarding claim 15, Jones in view of Candelore discloses the method as discussed in the rejection of claim 11. The combined system further discloses the coupon has only a current value, whereas the service has a discount value unique to the service, and the discount value given to the service is subtracted from the current value given to the coupon by designating the coupon when the viewer uses the service (taught by Candelore; see Figures 5-6).

Regarding claim 16, Jones in view of Candelore discloses the method as discussed in the rejection of claim 11. The combined system further discloses the

coupon includes address information of an issuer of said coupon (taught by Jones; Col 10 lines 25-30), and personal information of said viewer is notified to said issuer of said coupon when said viewer uses said coupon (taught by Candelore; Col 11 lines 36-40).

Regarding claim 17, Jones discloses all limitations of the method as discussed in the rejection of claim 1. Jones further discloses said information broadcast receiving terminal apparatus is connected to said center over a telephone line (Col 12 lines 52-57), further comprising the steps of:

accumulating in the information broadcast receiving terminal apparatus information relating to a use record of said viewer (see element 120 in Figures 3-4 and Col 9 lines 7-14 for storing (accumulating) the demographic information including the users' consumption habits and their interested classes of products (a use record of the users) in the subscriber unit);

receiving by the information broadcast information terminal apparatus the transmitted coupon indirect information (Col 8 lines 44-55 and Col 14 lines 12-16);

judging by the information broadcast information terminal apparatus whether said coupon indirect information is addressed to itself or not (Col 9 lines 4-20 for coupon processor of the subscriber unit compares the received demographic information from coupon packet to the demographic information accumulated in the subscriber unit to detect a match (judging whether the received coupon information is addressed to the subscriber unit or not)); and

decoding, in the case where said coupon indirect information is addressed to itself, the

coupon indirect information so as to issue said coupon (Col 9 lines 15-19 for displaying an indication to notify the viewer of coupon availability if a match is detected; Col 9 line 21 through Col 10 line 6 for retrieving corresponding coupon information to print a coupon in respond to user's request). Jones further discloses coupon information including a destination of said coupon, a type of said coupon and an amount of said coupon (Col 11 lines 50-62).

Jones does not explicitly disclose adding an amount corresponding to a coupon to be broadcasted to said use record of said viewer; transmitting a user request to the center; broadcasting a coupon corresponding to the user request in response to said request of said viewer.

Candelore discloses a system of digital coupons for pay television (title). In this system the subscribers automatically receive coupon credits, corresponding to user request of programs, which are free or reduced price for a particular pay-per-view program when they meet the preconditions of the digital coupons by purchasing or requesting a given number of PPV programs from the provider. The terminals maintain a running balance of available coupon credits and inform subscribers the available balance (see abstract). The digital coupon balance is adjusted to add more coupon credit amount by participating in lottery, games or other contests (Col 7 lines 6-12).

Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to modify Jones' system with the teaching of Candelore, so to provide an enhanced interactive coupon system which allow users to receive an

immediate credit for their loyalty upon user's purchase of programs and encourage users to purchase additional program services.

Regarding claim 18, Jones discloses all limitations of the method as discussed in the rejection of claim 1. With the same motivation to modify Jones' system with the teaching of Candelore as discussed in claim 17, the combined system further discloses information broadcast receiving terminal apparatus is connected to said center over a telephone line (taught by Jones; Col 12 lines 52-57 and also taught by Candelore; Col 5 lines 32-36), said service providing apparatus in said center manages a use record of coupons by said viewer instead of said information broadcast receiving terminal apparatus (taught by Candelore; see "usage pattern data accounting 125" is managed by the server), said information broadcast receiving terminal apparatus requests over said telephone line said center (taught by Candelore; Col 5 lines 32-36 for communicating between the user terminals and the server via a telephone network) to add an amount corresponding to a coupon to the use record of coupons of said viewer when said viewer uses said coupon (Col 7 lines 6-12), whereby said service providing apparatus updates the use record in response to said request (Col 11 lines 36-40).

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to GIGI L. DUBASKY whose telephone number is

(571)270-5686. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Thursday from 8:00 AM to 5:30 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John W. Miller can be reached on 571-272-7353. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

GD

/Joseph G Ustaris/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 2424